Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

A diagnostic on social protection needs and opportunities for forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania

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A diagnostic on social protection needs and opportunities for forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Cover photo: A forest-dependent community close to Dar es Salaam relies on water and fuelwood from the surrounding forest. ©FAO/Qiang Ma

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CBFM	community-based forest management
HADO	Hifadhi Ardhi Dodoma (Dodoma Land Rehabilitation Programme)
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JFM	joint forest management
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
NWFP	non-wood forest product
PFM	participatory forest management
PSSN	Productive Social Safety Net
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, including the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
VICOBA	Village Community Banks
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

This study is aimed at gaining an understanding of the poverty and vulnerability situation of forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania and generating information on the availability of social protection interventions, with a view to identifying pathways for establishing sustainable social protection for these communities. Social protection is taken to include "all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination and abuse" (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2008).

Two hypotheses guided the study. First, the way in which forest-dependent communities obtain their livelihoods is a function of the changing forest environment: When the existence of the forests is threatened, the livelihoods of the communities are also negatively affected. Second, the vulnerability of forest-dependent communities, the result of human factors, requires social protection measures to enable the people and the forests to survive and thrive. The main limitation to the communities' progress is their low status and marginalization, so remedying the situation will entail efforts to further empower the affected communities.

The study findings paint a mixed picture. Anecdotal evidence and indications from grey literature suggest that access to social protection for the country's forest-dependent communities is limited, in part because the forest sector is mostly associated with informal activities. Even where some programmes have been implemented, they are not necessarily driven by the risks and vulnerabilities particular to these communities; neither social protection instruments nor complementary services have been designed with forest-dependent communities in mind. The lack of innovation in the area of social protection for forest-dependent communities has aggravated the situation. For example, despite common knowledge that deforestation has been happening at an alarming rate, little or no consideration has been given to the free supply of tree seedlings to the communities, which could be considered a responsive social protection instrument.

The United Republic of Tanzania has developed a series of policies and programmes over the past three decades to address the interdependence between communities and forest resources (such as participatory forest management). Historically, the conservation of the country's forests has been driven by traditional and customary practices, with forest resources used for sacred as well as social and economic purposes. Forests mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, supply a wide range of wood and non-wood products and provide water. In addition, they are a source of medicines and provide recreational and aesthetic value. Forest-dependent communities are diverse, but beyond

their dependence on forests and forest products they share a number of common characteristics, including remote location with limited access to infrastructure and services; low agricultural productivity, affecting food and nutrition security; low social status (as they tend to be indigenous communities), with women particularly marginalized; low levels of education; and lack of political voice.

The underlying causes of deforestation are many and complex. They include land clearance for small-scale subsistence farming, dependence by resource-poor households on cash income from the sale of forest products, and commercial production of fuelwood and charcoal as an alternative source of income to meet urban energy demands. Therefore, over the years, the pressures on the country's forests have mostly derived from human factors.

A review of literature reveals five sets of issues.

- Forest-dependent communities in the country face extreme poverty, risk and vulnerability, mostly because of their remote rural location and the practice of subsistence agriculture as the main form of livelihood.
- The policies, institutions, legal frameworks, and governance of the forest sector disfavour poorer communities, notwithstanding the efforts that successive governments have made to promote the concept of community forestry.
- The incidence of informal activities is high, mainly because of the expansion of illegal logging activities, charcoal production and encroachment of forests for crop farming.
- Risk, poverty and vulnerability are linked to deforestation and forest degradation.
- There is little or no evidence of deliberate social protection provision for forest-dependent communities in any recognizable form, either specifically for the communities or in the context of wider national programming.

Based on field findings from the study, it is concluded that poverty and vulnerability among the forest-dependent communities is a function of two types of factors, structural and non-structural. While forests have a key role in tempering environmental degradation, a combination of remote rural location, absence of quality services, the limited nature of alternative livelihood opportunities, and the lack of targeted social protection programmes increases vulnerability to shocks and stresses for the forest-dependent communities. Similarly, forest-dependent communities are constrained by limited access to assets and resources and low agricultural productivity which reduce their ability to cope with emerging economic and natural risks and shocks. Forest-dependent communities differ from others in the country in terms of financial and other assets, as explained by factors ranging from structural inequality to the lack of functioning markets and uneducated or poorly educated populations.

Climate variability and climate change were also found to be key drivers of risk and vulnerability for forest-dependent communities – attributed to the heavy reliance of the communities on trees and other forest products, exacerbated by growing population pressure which strains the environment, leading to loss of biodiversity, rapid deterioration in land cover and a significant decrease in water availability due to the destruction of catchment areas.

The evidence presented in the study suggests that, while the authorities have made efforts to address poverty and vulnerability through social protection, most of these efforts do not necessarily directly respond to the nature, the needs or the complexity of vulnerability of forest-dependent communities. Given that poorer households in these communities are generally more forest reliant (obtaining a higher share of their income from the forest), negative changes to the forest resource base affect them considerably. Specific social protection measures are needed for those who are exposed to this kind of poverty and vulnerability.

Several social protection needs for forest-dependent communities are identified. Social protection coverage among these communities is extremely limited, especially given the high levels and widespread nature of poverty and vulnerability. Furthermore, the instruments and complementary services that are in place have not been designed with the particularities of these communities in mind. Overall, the needs for individuals and households vary according to their stage in the life cycle. For example, for infants and pre-school children, the main need is for mothers to be able to obtain medicinal plants and rare highly nutritious foods which are necessary for their survival. For school-aged children (age 5 to 11 years), the needs include supplementary income in the household, the ability to obtain scholastic materials and access to woodfuel for home use. In later life, during adolescence and young adulthood (12 to 24 years), the most important needs are to avoid sexual exploitation for girls and young women, to obtain sufficient food, to develop skills and to prevent HIV infection. Among working-age adults (age 25 to 55 years), the main need is to secure stable jobs and ensure income and food security. Finally, in old age (55 years and above), addressing the challenges of poor health, poor nutrition, age discrimination and the need to care for AIDS orphans are paramount.

The study identifies several opportunities. At the policy level, social protection programmes are part of the country's development strategy and not simply a set of relief programmes. The Mkukuta II National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010), for example, provides a framework that seeks "to prevent unacceptable levels of socio-economic insecurity and deprivation" and underscores "the developmental role that social protection can play in preventing poverty traps". The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), financed through a World Bank credit and established in 2000, targets the needs of poor and vulnerable households through asset creation, safety-net provision, skill development, income-generating activities and capacity building. For example, TASAF II piloted a community-based conditional cash transfer programme to test the viability of implementing cash transfers through a social fund and could effectively be used in support of forest-dependent communities. Other social protection instruments that could be applied to benefit forest-dependent communities include interventions defined in the National Food Security Policy and the National Disaster Management Policy (2004); mandatory government schemes providing social security in the country; a Social Security Regulatory Authority created to help harmonize funds and reduce fragmentation; non-contributory, means-tested social assistance to vulnerable individuals and groups; and voluntary market-based schemes to provide coverage over and above the mandatory schemes.

1. Introduction

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Social protection is commonly defined as the "set of all initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequences of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination and abuse" (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2008).

The United Republic of Tanzania has made great strides in designing, piloting and rolling out social protection programmes and in incorporating these into the country's macro-economic strategy. Despite these laudable efforts, social protection provision for forest-dependent communities is extremely limited. In an effort to generate understanding of the issues and options for making social protection accessible to these communities, FAO commissioned a diagnostic study to gain understanding of poverty and vulnerability from the viewpoint of forest-dependent communities; to generate information on the availability of social protection interventions; and to engage the Tanzanian Government and other actors in dialogue with a view to identifying pathways for establishing sustainable social protection for these marginalized communities.

The rationale for the study was to identify contemporary social protection issues and gaps for forest-dependent communities and to suggest ways in which such communities could better benefit from existing programmes, as well as how new and innovative social protection approaches could be developed. The study was also expected to contribute new knowledge on key risk and vulnerability issues relating to forest-dependent communities and the application of social protection, especially in fragile and at-risk environments.

This report presents the key findings that emerge from a review of literature on the subject, consultations with selected forest-dependent communities in the country and discussions with a cross-section of other stakeholders. On the basis of the findings and analysis, specific recommendations are made on possible ways in which social protection strategies and provision could be improved for the benefit of forest-dependent communities.

CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study hypothesizes that the way in which forest-dependent communities obtain their livelihoods is a function of the changing forest environment. When the existence of the forests is threatened, the livelihoods of the dependent populations are also negatively affected, which implies a need for safety-net interventions. Similarly, when the population

of forest-dependent communities grows excessively relative to the size of the forests, and the forests fail to produce either sufficient food crops or sufficient and sustainable revenues for the purchase of food and other basic needs, the communities are forced not only to seek alternative sources of income or to adopt coping mechanisms, but also to engage in activities that further endanger the sustainability of the forests. In order to mitigate this situation, it is argued, social protection interventions that are context specific and sensitive to the peculiarities of forest-dependent communities are needed. Such interventions enable the communities to protect and enhance their livelihoods and prevent further destruction of forests.

It is further hypothesized that because forest-dependent communities are vulnerable, often because of human factors, mitigating social protection measures are required for the people and the forests to survive and thrive; and that the main limitation to improved socio-economic conditions for these these communities is the low status and marginalization of forest-dependent communities, which implies a need for efforts to further empower the affected communities.

This analytical framework is further developed during the literature review stage.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in four distinct but interconnected stages. Stage 1 comprised a review of existing literature on poverty and vulnerability in the United Republic of Tanzania's forest-dependent communities and an examination of social protection provisions in the country, with a focus on the forest-dependent communities in the country. From this review the study team was able to determine the diversity and complexity of issues that needed to be addressed in the field consultations.

During Stage 2, initial national-level consultations were carried out, mostly in Dar es Salaam, using a topic guide which was developed after the review of literature. The interviews included various stakeholders in the forest sector in government, training and policy research institutions and think tanks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, as well as political leaders. Consultations with government officials aimed at deepening understanding of the policy issues, challenges and options relating to the role of social protection in forest-dependent communities. During this phase, ideas were sought on potential areas for fieldwork. Four regions were identified, namely Lindi, Manyara, Shinyanga and Singida, from which two were to be selected for fieldwork. (Following further consultations, Singida was later replaced by Dodoma.) The aim here was a balance in the diversity of communities and issues as well as potential for in-depth understanding. Ultimately three regions were selected, namely Dodoma, Lindi and Manyara. Within each region, districts were selected that reflected the key characteristics for which the regions were selected.

Stage 3 comprised field consultations in particular communities within each selected district, chosen for their diversity. Each of these communities was treated as a case study. Enquiries at the community level followed a sequence of steps:

- understanding the context of the community and its forest resources and how these have evolved over time;

- understanding community structure, livelihoods and dynamics;
- relating community needs to existing social protection and other services;
- examining links among changing forest resources, environmental factors and livelihood outcomes for forest-dependent communities;
- exploring opportunities for initiating new social protection mechanisms and/or incorporating forest-dependent communities in existing ones.

Qualitative methods were employed to gather data and information from a cross-section of stakeholders, particularly those that depend in one way or another on forest products. In order to ensure that the research approach was consistent, a field guide was prepared for use by the study team, describing the range of tools that the researchers could use.

In the final stage (Stage 4), the research team carried out analysis leading to compilation of this final report. The report was subjected to a validation exercise which was attended by a cross-section of stakeholders from central and local government agencies, think tanks and academic institutions, communities in which the research was undertaken, and NGOs and agencies involved in the natural resource sector.

STUDY SITES

Fieldwork was carried out in three regions, and specifically in four districts, four wards and seven villages (Table 1).

Table 1. Study sites

Region	District	Ward	Village	General comments about the region
Dodoma	Kondoa	Kisese	Bereko	Host to the country's administrative capital Population of 2 083 588 with annual population growth of 2.1 percent (2012) Long history of famine and economic difficulties
Lindi	Kilwa	Kikore	Kisangi	Ranked the third poorest region in the country Population of approximately 860 000
	Lindi Municipal	Tandangongoro	Mkangamoja	
			Ndandambi	
			Tulieni	
			Mingoyo	
Manyara	Kiteto	Sunya	Sunya	Population of 1 425 131 with 3.2 percent annual population growth (2012) – one of the country's highest growth rates
			Orkitikiti	
			Kisese-Disa	

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While most of the studied communities share many features, clear distillation of forest dependencies within or among the communities proved difficult for the research team. For example, linkages between forest dependence and well-being at the different geographical levels - region, district, ward and village – could not be consistently assessed, as access to comparable information varied from one location to another. Similarly, it was not possible to determine which causal factors influence outcomes in the forest-dependent communities studied, as this would have required more time than was available to the research team.

The concepts of "community" and "forest dependence"

An important challenge in the study related to the definition of the term "forest-dependent community". Of specific interest were two questions: what defines a "community" and what "forest dependence" actually means. Some study respondents perceived forest-dependent people as those whose primary livelihood depends on forests, while others used the term more loosely to refer to all those who benefit in some way from forests. The lack of clarity on the extent of dependence was a limitation. On the "community" concept, the study chose to adopt the notion of locality-based shared identity, which draws in part from the McMillan and Chavis (1986) definition. Based on Gusfield (1975), these authors identified four key elements of community, namely membership ("the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness"); influence ("a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members"); reinforcement, integration and fulfilment of needs ("the feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group"); and shared emotional connection ("the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences") (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

The term "forest-dependent" was loosely used to refer to any people who rely on forests and their products for their livelihood. The study focused mainly on those people who rely on forests rather directly as sources of income, food or materials. It specifically considered people who live within forests (such as hunter-gatherers); those who live near forests, perhaps engaging in agriculture outside the forest, but who regularly use forest products (e.g. timber, fuelwood, bush foods, medicinal plants) for their subsistence and income generation purposes; and those who live outside the forests but are actively engaged in forest-based activities such as logging, trapping or collecting minerals.

Scope

Owing to the limited financial resources, the scope of the study included only three regions. It was thus not possible to undertake a detailed comparative analysis across the United Republic of Tanzania's numerous forest-dependent communities. Besides limiting the units of analysis and the time that could be spent within each unit, financial constraints also limited the study's ability to provide a good understanding of the

diversity of social protection issues in the forest-dependent communities of such a large country. Similarly, the limited availability of data on beneficiaries of social protection programmes in different parts of the country made it difficult to reach conclusions about key points of analysis.

Information availability

Furthermore, the absence of previous studies on the subject in the United Republic of Tanzania meant that the researchers had to rely more on indirectly related literature and evidence.

The qualitative research methods used may also have constrained the comparability of results among different research units. While the study team made considerable efforts to triangulate the information collected and to verify its authenticity, it was not always possible to verify all self-reported information independently, especially for any bias. Accordingly, some of the information that was obtained from respondents may be distorted through selective memory, attribution issues and on occasion even exaggeration.

2. Literature review

Overall, four broad issues emerged from the literature review:

- The incidence of poverty, risk and vulnerability is high among forest-dependent communities.
- The range of social protection measures among the communities is limited.
- Direct income support and other social protection instruments could present untapped opportunities for alleviating extreme poverty.
- Social protection schemes could offer potential for directly increasing the adoption of sustainable forest management practices, thereby engendering a two-way relationship between environmental sustainability and poverty eradication.

POVERTY, RISK AND VULNERABILITY IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2005) categorized the United Republic of Tanzania as one of the poorest countries in the world. Affirming this view, the *Tanzania Human Development Report 2014* (UNDP and Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, 2015) observed that although the proportion of people living below the food poverty line declined from 1990 to 2007, the decline was only from 22 to 16.6 percent. It follows that the country was unable to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of 10.5 percent reduction in extreme poverty by 2015. A civil society review of progress towards the MDGs in Commonwealth countries (Commonwealth Foundation, 2013) affirmed the limited nature of financial poverty decline (defined as people living on less than USD 1.25 a day) from 35.7 percent in 2001 to 33.6 percent in 2011, attributing this primarily to the effects of "a stringent policy regulatory framework on the country's heavily agrarian economy, worsening financial flows (including reduced foreign direct investment, official development assistance, and short-term capital flows), and low national capacity to deal with natural shocks". Further, even though the country has seen a significant number of new jobs created in the informal sector, unemployment remains a large problem, especially for the age group of 18 to 34 years; and even where some jobs have been created, the quality of these jobs is poor.

The high poverty rate is aggravated by very high vulnerability, especially in rural areas. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre observes, for example, that persistent rural poverty has become structural, with many people lacking the resources to invest in their smallholdings or to diversify elsewhere, and many stuck just below the poverty line with few escape routes (Shepherd *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, environmental degradation (including forest degradation), largely attributed to poor management of environmental resources, has been identified as a predictable impoverishing force, with the conditions

created by floods and drought often resulting in famine or other disasters. Observing that poverty has often been transmitted from one generation to another through such factors as child malnutrition and declining ownership of productive assets (such as livestock), Shepherd *et al.* (2011) also concluded that the resultant decline in living standards has accentuated vulnerability. Any observed improvement in the quality of life was often attributed to better access to education.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE VARIABILITY

While weather and climate variability in the United Republic of Tanzania have not been studied extensively, the available literature conclusively links the high temporal and spatial rainfall variability in East Africa to the El Niño-Southern Oscillation[1] and the Indian Ocean Dipole reversal. Cai *et al.* (2014) observe an increasing frequency of extreme El Niño events due to greenhouse warming. Using 20 climate models to examine possible changes in El Niño over the next 100 years, they project that super El Niño events could double in the future, occurring roughly every 10 instead of 20 years. Grey literature also reflects a perception that the frequency of extreme events due to human-induced climate change is increasing. Increasingly numerous studies drawing on relatively short-term rainfall records (30 to 40 years) attribute observed variation or downward trends to human activity.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, as in other countries in the region, climate variability has particular impacts on the natural resource setting, including forests. It provides an important context for understanding weather-related risk and vulnerability and hence the need for social protection. In a report on vulnerability and adaptation preparedness in the country, Hepworth (2010) suggests that "climate change impacts were more likely to be felt through changes in variability" and "long-term shifts in average conditions". He observes that the uncertainty created by climatic variability tends to have more negative impacts on farmers' livelihoods than the extreme nature of events, as it leads to food insecurity and economic, infrastructural and other associated negative impacts (Box 1). He also projects that "over the next 20 to 100 years mean annual temperatures will rise at a rate which has been unprecedented over the last 10 000 years" and that "over this period sea level will rise by between 0.1 and 1 metre bringing inundation and flooding to coastal areas, particularly problematic in low lying but densely populated areas in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar". Ahmed *et al.* (2009) have expressed similar views, suggesting that "climate volatility will increase in the future, with agricultural productivity expected to become increasingly volatile" and that "for Tanzania, where food production and prices are sensitive to the climate, rising climate volatility could have severe implications for poverty".

These observations are consistent with studies revealing negative impacts elsewhere.

[1] The El Niño-Southern Oscillation is a naturally occurring phenomenon that involves fluctuation in ocean temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, which causes variations in regional climate patterns. In East Africa El Niño has been known to cause drought or unseasonable dryness as a result of depressed rainfall or flooding as a result of heavier rainfall. It is not yet clear how rising global and ocean temperatures contribute to intensification of El Niño.

For example, in Uganda, Hepworth and Goulden (2008) observe water scarcity, excessive flooding, higher temperatures leading to unprecedented evaporation, recurrent drought, conflict for water and biodiversity loss. Increased rainfall intensity, together with land degradation and encroachment, is reported to raise risks of life and property loss, the extension of malaria into higher or once cooler areas and prevalence of water-borne diseases due to flooding (including diarrhoeal diseases and cholera epidemics), while prolonged dry spells raise the risk of malnutrition. Similarly, Hallegatte *et al.* (2016) point out that "climate-sensitive events are already a critical obstacle for people trying to escape poverty and those who are vulnerable to falling back into poverty". These authors highlight "three major channels through which climate-sensitive events already affect the ability of poor people to escape poverty, namely: (i) agricultural production, ecosystems, and food security; (ii) natural disasters; and (iii) health – all of which are significantly affected by climate change".

Box 1 - The role of climate variability

Existing climate variability has significant socio-economic impacts in Tanzania, in particular through floods, droughts and changes in seasonal rainfall. Periodic floods and droughts bring widespread infrastructure damage, displacement, erosion of livelihood assets and food insecurity. Most recently, in January 2010, unusually heavy rainfall associated with the current El Niño event saw widespread flooding in Morogoro and Dodoma Regions which led the International Federation of Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies to launch an emergency appeal for USD 1.6 million. Kilosa District was particularly badly hit with 50 000 people affected, 28 000 forced to vacate their homes and 10 000 people homeless. Water and sanitation infrastructure and roads were badly damaged, with large areas of farmland flooded. Drought also took a heavy toll in 2009 with pastoralist villages in the north of the country losing up to 80 percent of their herds. Changes in rainfall reliability, onset and cessation caused crop failure and hunger, exacerbated by other stresses such as land degradation and insecurity of land tenure.

Source: Hepworth, 2010

Table 2 summarizes the impacts of climate change in the United Republic of Tanzania by sector.

Table 2. Impacts of climate change in the United Republic of Tanzania, by sector and effect

Effect / Sector	Higher temperatures	Increased drought	Increased rainfall and shift in seasonality	Sea-level rise	Impacts
Human health	Shifts in disease vector habitats and incidence of malaria; respiratory problems	Increased risk of water-related disease; food shortage; water conflict; famine 2 million affected by food shortages in 2006/2007; 3 million in 1996/1997	Increased risk of waterborne disease; flood and landslide risk	Inundation in low-lying coastal areas; possible elevated salinization of coastal aquifers	Conflict; health burdens and risks; economic costs; poverty; inequity
Agriculture and food security	Shifts in the viable area for coffee and cash crops; reduced maize output; higher evapotranspiration losses	Crop failure; reduction in grazing lands and stock loss	Elevated erosion, land degradation crop loss; change in crop yields and diseases	Potential impacts on marine coastal fisheries	Food insecurity; economic shocks; loss of incomes and livelihood options; poverty
Infrastructure and settlements	Increased evaporative losses; damage to roads; cooling costs	Significant implications for hydroelectric power; water shortage	Flood damage to infrastructure, transport, communications and settlements Only 3% of roads sealed	Coastal inundation and modification to port facilities USD 85 million damage in Dar es Salaam with 0.5 m rise	Economic loss and growth volatility; reduced reliability of hydroelectric power; migration
Environment and biodiversity	Biodiversity loss as niches are closed out; changing ecosystem dynamics and production	Additional pressure on natural resource use (forests and fisheries)	Shift in habitats and growing seasons	Potential impacts on marine coastal ecosystems	Impacts on biodiversity and agro-ecological systems and fishery productivity; deforestation

Source: Hepworth, 2010

GENERAL STATE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROVISION IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

The review of literature suggests that social protection programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania are part of the country's development strategy and not simply a set of "residual programmes for relief". The Mkukuta II National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (United Republic of Tanzania, 2010), for example, provides a solid policy framework for this approach. In Goal 6, it states that the main objective of social protection is "to prevent unacceptable levels of socio-economic insecurity and deprivation" and also underscores "the developmental role that social protection can play in preventing poverty traps, reducing household insecurity, and encouraging investments in poverty-reducing assets" (Box 2). As such, the Tanzanian Government, through this key policy instrument, commits to social protection both for protecting consumption and for enabling more people to participate in economic growth. This, it is believed, serves to boost poor people's asset-building and effective demand for key services and equity, in turn leading to inclusive economic growth. However, many questions still remain unresolved, especially what the objectives of social protection in the country should be, who should be targeted and under what sort of targeting system. The draft 2009 National Social Protection Framework further discusses these issues.

Despite the supportive policy framework, the literature review suggests that the scope and scale of social protection interventions in the United Republic of Tanzania is limited (ILO, 2008; Lerisse, Mmari and Baruani, 2003), particularly for forest-dependent communities which tend to lack political capital (and hence also visibility to decision-makers). In practice, also, social protection programmes are still generally viewed as residual or peripheral to pro-poor economic development. They are also only invoked in times of economic or social crises, which implies that they are short-term and discontinuous in nature.

Lerisse, Mmari and Baruani (2003) observe a wide range of social protection interventions and frameworks in place in the country, including, but not limited to, interventions defined in the National Food Security Policy and the National Disaster Management Policy (2004); mandatory government schemes providing social security in the country; a Social Security Regulatory Authority created to help harmonize funds and reduce fragmentation; non-contributory, means-tested social assistance to vulnerable individuals and groups; and voluntary market-based schemes to provide coverage over and above the mandatory schemes.

In the financial year 1994–1995, the Tanzanian Government established a Community Health Fund as a pro-poor intervention to improve the financing and provision of health care to needy households. More recently, also, the private sector has developed private insurance schemes. However, forest-dependent communities seem to be on the margins of most of these social protection programmes.

A wide body of literature refers to the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), financed through a World Bank credit and established in 2000, as one of the country's social protection programmes with the widest reach, providing financing and support

Box 2 - Priorities for social protection in the Mkukuta II National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty

Social protection operational targets

- Proportion of vulnerable children, including children outside family care, disabled, and eligible adults covered with social protection measures increased;
- Proportion of eligible elderly people reached with minimum social pension increased.

Social protection cluster strategies

- Mainstreaming provision of social protection measures in the plans of State and non-State actors;
- Continuing provision of care and support to people living with HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and those indirectly affected including home-based care and social security schemes including food safety nets;
- Strengthening systems and institutions for effective access to minimum social protection package, including exemption and waiver schemes for PWDs [people living with disabilities], OVCs [orphans and vulnerable children], elderly people living with HIV and other vulnerable groups;
- Supporting capacity of poor households to care for vulnerable members;
- Increasing access to civil registration systems for older people, OVCs and PWDs;
- Promoting economic empowerment of vulnerable groups, through such measures as start-up kits for income generating activities (IGAs) and cash transfers;
- Revising policy and regulations to ease access to financial services and exemptions applicable to vulnerable groups;
- Promoting and coordinat[ing] involvement of the government, development partners (DPs), NGOs, faith-based organizations (FBOs), the business sector and communities;
- Improving capacity to deal with disasters and strengthen[ing] emergency preparedness systems at village, district, and national level;
- Ensuring equitable geographical recruitment and retention of adequate number of social workers;
- Promoting private sector initiatives in implementing social protection measures, including promoting corporate social responsibility to support social protection interventions.

Source: United Republic of Tanzania, 2010

for small-scale, local-level public investments. It is targeted at meeting the needs of poor and vulnerable households through asset creation, safety-net provision, skills development, income-generating activities and capacity building in economic development management issues. In its second phase (TASAF II, 2005–2013), through the National Village Fund, the programme provided employment opportunities to food-insecure households, offering income-generating opportunities to vulnerable groups, promoting access and use of social services, raising awareness and building community capacity

to save and invest. TASAF II also piloted a community-based conditional cash transfer programme to test the viability of implementing cash transfers through a social fund using a community-driven development approach. This programme was intended to provide cash transfers to poor and vulnerable families conditional upon increased family access to education and health services. However, there is no evidence to suggest that forest-dependent communities were significant beneficiaries of the scheme.

According to TASAF, opportunities are emerging for forest dependent communities. TASAF II planted 3.8 million trees, supported 3 380 beehives and conserved 59 000 ha of land through participatory forest management (PFM) programmes. The third phase (TASAF III, ongoing) supports cash transfers, public works and livelihoods enhancement through the Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) programme. Only the cash transfer component of PSSN has reached national scale; it is now operating in all of the country's 161 districts, with coverage of 1.2 million households and nearly 7 million people. By design, PSSN is meant to target the country's poorest 10 percent of the population, and it has already achieved this through the cash transfers. This is not the case with the PSSN public works, now operational in only 44 districts, while the livelihoods enhancement component is being piloted in just two districts.

SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

Specific literature on social protection for the United Republic of Tanzania's forest-dependent communities is scanty. This shortcoming notwithstanding, anecdotal evidence and indications from grey literature suggest that access to social protection for forest-dependent communities is limited. Some authors attribute this lack to the fact that the forest sector is mostly associated with informal activities (Blomley *et al.*, n.d.). Others, such as Robinson, Albers and Lokina (2012), point out that the United Republic of Tanzania has developed a series of policies over the past three decades to address rural people's dependence on forest resources while aiming to minimize deforestation and degradation of the forests – including integrated conservation–development projects (ICDPs), PFM and community-based forest management (CBFM) – yet they have neither been explicit about social protection nor shown links with the design or implementation of existing social protection programmes.

FORESTS, FOREST LIVELIHOODS AND FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Winrock International (2006) observes that "the contribution of forests to local livelihoods and the Tanzanian national economy is significant but largely unrecorded". Anecdotal information and grey literature suggests that forest resources are essential for supplementing farm incomes, but that the association of forest activities and services with the informal sector and "illegal activities" led for a long time to poor recording or recognition of the value of forests. Blomley (2006) acknowledges that in earlier times "the uncertainty of tenure rights in forested areas" led to overexploitation of forest resources for short-term gain, but observes that this situation has significantly changed since the

introduction of CBFM, through which communities acquired rights to manage, protect and use the forests in a more sustainable manner.

According to FAO (2015), the forest cover of the United Republic of Tanzania as a percentage of the country's land area was estimated to have declined from 58.6 in 2000 to 52.0 in 2015. The forests can be divided into two broad categories, namely reserved forests (central and local government forest reserves, government-owned industrial plantations and village land forest reserves [VLFRs] at the community level that have been gazetted by the central government) and non-reserved forests (forests and woodlands on "general" or "village" lands that are not formally classified as reserves). These categories respectively comprise about 37 percent (12.5 million hectares) and 57 percent (19 million hectares) of the country's forests (FAO, 2014). The literature also indicates that throughout all past generations the conservation of forests in the United Republic of Tanzania was supported by traditional and customary practices, maintaining the resources for sacred, religious or social purposes. Thus in addition to supplying a wide range of wood and non-wood products (including medicines, water and poles for house-building), forests mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and provide opportunities for recreation and aesthetic value. At the most basic level, the forests are also recognized as the main source of energy for the rural population, accounting for up to 90 percent of energy consumption.

GENERAL STATUS OF FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

While forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania are as diverse as the country itself, the literature indicates that they generally share some common characteristics:

- location in remote rural areas with limited access to infrastructure and to social, economic or other services;
- overdependence on forests and forest products, making them vulnerable to impacts from declining forest cover and increased frequency of human-induced and other natural shocks;
- low agricultural activity, which increases their food and nutrition insecurity;
- low social status, as they tend to be indigenous communities, and marginalization of women in particular;
- low levels of education (implying high levels of illiteracy), which limits acquisition of human capital for coping and for engaging in diversified livelihood opportunities;
- lack of a political voice, causing them to routinely miss out on mainstream development opportunities, including social protection.

FOREST DEGRADATION AND VULNERABILITY

The underlying causes of deforestation in the United Republic of Tanzania are many and complex. They include land clearance for small-scale subsistence farming (due to increasing populations and low-intensity agricultural practices such as shifting cultivation), dependence by resource-poor households on cash income from the sale

of forest products (such as charcoal, honey, wild fruits and fuelwood), commercial production of fuelwood and charcoal as an alternative source of income to meet urban energy demands, the demand for fuelwood for curing tobacco, and an influx of refugees from neighbouring countries (particularly Burundi). Thus, over the years, human factors have mainly been responsible for the pressures on the country's forests. The resettlement of refugees in the western part of the country, and the associated overexploitation of forests for fuel and building poles, has had particularly negative impacts. The paucity of data on deforestation notwithstanding, FAO (2015) estimated that between 1990 and 2015 at least 394 400 ha were lost every year.

POLICY REFORMS AND FOREST LIVELIHOODS

In the recent paper "Differentiated livelihoods, local institutions, and the adaptation imperative", Smucker *et al.* (2015) argue that "Tanzanian policy has created an anti-politics of adaptation by silencing the multiple institutional and political dimensions that hang in the balance in the identification and pursuit of adaptation priorities". While this conclusion refers specifically to climate change adaptation policy, it is also apt in describing the policy reform dynamics in the area of social protection for forest-dependent communities in the country.

Of particular interest in the policy reform agenda is the problem of land tenure and forest property rights in the country. While the Tanzanian Government claims public ownership of all forest land and reserves the exclusive right to make decisions about its use, the main issue is how legal and policy instruments are used in protection of the forests.

Traditionally Tanzanian communities participated in forest management, albeit on a small scale. For example, various ethnic groups traditionally protected small patches of forest for use in prayers, fortune telling or rituals such as initiation. The regions of Tanga, Kilimanjaro, Rukwa and Shinyanga still have such forest areas, managed through traditional knowledge and practices.

The immediate post-independence policy view was that forests should be conserved through the gazetting of forest reserves, which were then physically protected by forest guards managed by the central government. In this approach, adopted by most African countries, the government was simply perpetuating the tenure regime from the colonial period, whereby forest governance was vested under State control. In theory, central ownership of land (forests) invalidates all customary property rights, although it should be acknowledged that local communities still appear to feel a strong sense of forest ownership under the traditional tenure system.

The policy reforms that seemed to have the most impact in the period following independence were those linked to the nationalization of land as a means of production during the Arusha Declaration of 1967. These reforms were followed by the introduction of the Villagization Programme in the 1970s, which resettled large proportions of the rural population in planned centres. The resulting population concentrations had a high dependence on fuelwood, which in turn led to deforestation on a large scale.

Not surprisingly, centralized control, which deprived the local people of access and ownership rights (USAID, n.d.; Ward *et al.*, 2005), failed to yield the expected results. As a result of inadequate finances and other resources for patrolling the forests, coupled with the lack of people's participation, the forests were not adequately protected and became vulnerable to degradation, encroachment and fragmentation. The lack of clarity on tenure rights discouraged communities from protecting forests from outside encroachment.

The underlying rationale for more recent policy instruments is that tenure security has a positive influence on forest conservation and that the public goods found in the forests (such as timber, herbs, water, wild foods and biodiversity) can be safeguarded by ensuring that they benefit the communities. In this view, devolution of authority to control the forests to the local communities was expected to result in better management of the forest resources, thereby enhancing the sustainable livelihoods of the communities.

In recent years, Tanzania has witnessed the emergence of participatory approaches, including CBFM and joint forest management (JFM). Projects adopting these approaches include the Hifadhi Ardhi Shinyanga (HASHI) soil conservation project in Shinyanga Region, the Land Management Project (LAMP) in Arusha Region, and the Hifadhi Mazingira (HIMA) environmental project in Iringa Region. Following the 1998 forest policy revision, local communities are now encouraged to co-manage forest reserves with the government through special JFM agreements. An example of a forest being managed under JFM is Udzungwa in Iringa Region. However, despite its popularity, there is limited evidence to suggest that CBFM as an approach intended simultaneously to address conservation and livelihood objectives in the country is yielding the expected results for local communities in terms of addressing poverty and vulnerability.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The foregoing review of literature reveals a paucity of information on social protection for forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania. Even where some literature is found it is lacking in quality and relevance to the study. That said, five sets of issues emerge from the review that give a good idea of potential focus areas for research.

Extreme poverty, risk and vulnerability faced by communities

According to the literature, most forest-dependent communities are located in remote rural areas and practise subsistence agriculture as their main form of livelihood. In these locations livelihood opportunities are limited. These areas are often unreached and sometimes unreachable by development interventions; furthermore, they harbour large proportions of people living in extreme poverty, and the situation is exacerbated by frequent threats to the communities through waves of forest grabbing and exploitation (see e.g. Robinson and Kajembe, 2009). Because of the high dependence on trees and forests for food and nutrition security, even a slight interference in people's livelihood compounds their poverty and vulnerability. However, since poor rural households are constrained by limited access to resources, low agricultural productivity and poorly functioning markets, forests often serve as a safety net for coping with crises. With the

slow growth in agriculture, and in the absence of alternative livelihood options, the poorer households that form the majority in the country's forest-adjacent communities tend to increase their reliance on forests but eventually either lose out to better-off individuals or have their access to forests restricted by new legal and institutional frameworks purportedly for environmental protection objectives.

Policies, institutions, legal frameworks, and governance of the forest sector

The question of land tenure and rights is at the forefront of this set of issues. The legal basis for land tenure in the United Republic of Tanzania, which is derived from The Land Act of 1999 and the Village Land Act (1999), denotes that all land in the United Republic of Tanzania is public land. Through complex relationships, authority levels and responsibilities, the presidency, district and village councils and local communities all have a stake in the management, use and conservation and protection of forests. In particular, the Tanzanian Government's concept of community forestry, which links the forest with citizenship and communities, is a commitment to strengthening organized forest management which promotes, at least in theory, the participation of local communities in the management and governance of their forests. However, this commitment to participatory governance needs to be tested against the actual benefits that forest-dependent communities derive from the policy and legal regime. In practice there still remain issues of power and effective representation. Hence, even with a favourable legal framework, evidence is needed that communities are not only involved in forest management, but are also benefiting from the existent legal and policy framework in a sustainable way.

Informal aspect of the forest sector

The high incidence of informality in the forest sector is due in part to the expansion of illegal logging activities, charcoal burning and encroachment of forests for crop farming. Grey literature also suggests that the main categories of people involved in the informal sector include self-employed workers, employers, contributing family workers and members of informal producers' cooperatives. A key characteristic of workers in the informal sector is that they tend to have low labour productivity and earnings. Given that wages in the forest sector are generally lower than those of other casual labour, it is evident that Tanzanian forest-dependent communities are exposed to a wide range of risks, and without social protection the impacts of such risks must not be underestimated.

High rates of deforestation and forest degradation, influencing risk and vulnerability

While the literature provides evidence that forests and forest resources contribute to livelihoods, and that the United Republic of Tanzania's experience in forest stewardship is firmly anchored in the country's laws and policies, this may now be changing because of financially induced unregulated deforestation and forest degradation. Forest destruction, poor management and environmental degradation continue. The high deforestation

rate in the United Republic of Tanzania is ascribed to both direct and indirect factors including settlement and agricultural expansion, commercial charcoal and fuelwood production, overgrazing, uncontrolled fires, shifting cultivation and illegal logging (Kaoneka, 1990, cited in Hamza and Kimwer, 2007). Pressure on natural resources is the underlying reason for the progressive escalation of ecological degradation, especially in the country's arid and semiarid areas. The recent influx of refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda into the country has aggravated the situation.

Lack of social protection initiatives

There is little or no evidence to suggest that deliberative social protection provision exists in any recognizable form for forest-dependent communities, either specifically for the communities or in the context of wider national programming. However, CBFM has been adopted in different parts of the country as a model for implementing pilot programmes for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, including the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+),[2] and it is conceivable that this approach could be used to build a working social protection model for forest-dependent communities in the country. In REDD+ programmes, payments are made to villages that have rights to forest carbon and that demonstrate reduced deforestation. It is suggested that implementation of the REDD+ model through CBFM-type structures creates appropriate incentives and behavioural change when the recipients of the (REDD+) funds are also the key drivers of forest change. This approach combines the principles of participation, effective benefit sharing and conservation with the objectives of risk mitigation and poverty reduction.

[2] REDD+ aims to slow carbon releases caused by forest disturbance by making payments conditional on forest quality over time. It is implemented through payments to potential forest degraders (incentives); through payments for enforcement (disincentives); or by addressing external drivers such as urban charcoal demand.

3. Study findings

THE NATURE OF POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY – COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Mixed perspectives on poverty

Community perceptions of poverty in the three study regions are mixed. For example, for reasons of pride and standing in the community, most people in Lindi (comprising Lindi and Kilwa Districts), ranked as the third poorest region in the country, detest being described as poor regardless of their livelihood situation. An informant in Nandambi village pointed out, for example, that some people will even forgo other household necessities in order to buy and adorn "good clothing" so that their poverty status is not obvious to others. On the other hand, evidence from Kilwa indicated that in areas where TASAF was being implemented most people were quick to admit their poverty status since this enhanced their eligibility to benefit from the cash transfer programme. As such, in these areas poverty insights can best be gained through closer knowledge and understanding of people's actual circumstances and experiences, including the quality and quantity of meals, the internal quality of housing or the number of meals that a household can afford. Evidence from focus discussion groups in two villages, for example, revealed in Nandambi a predominance of mud-and-wattle and grass-thatched housing structures, suggestive of poverty, while a considerable number of residents of Mkanga owned brick-wall houses with corrugated iron sheets, suggesting that the latter households were better off than their neighbours.

Material and non-material poverty

Views of poverty also vary in terms of the mix of material and non-material dimensions distinguished, the perceptions tending to differ from one socio-economic stratum to another. For example, better-off households in Kilwa consider "lack of cash" as a descriptor of poverty, while the less well-off point out that poverty manifests itself in such intangible assets as the absence of social networks or voice. Distinctions are also made between individual, household and community poverty, with individual poverty reflecting deficiencies in personal characteristics, such as educational attainment; household poverty reflecting income status or quality of housing; and community poverty being evidenced by shared assets or services such as schools or health facilities.

"Poverty is when your life is full of hardships – you cannot afford to eat more than one meal a day; your environment (especially where you sleep) is not good – you live in a

poorly constructed grass thatched house; you do not have access to financial assets; and you do not even have good health."

– Kisangi village natural resource committee member

"It is when the clothes you wear are not in good condition in comparison to others around you. You are not able to afford health care; you do not have any means to use for transport."

– Informant, Kisangi village, Kilwa

"It is when you do not have good meals, and most times you eat only once a day, yet whatever you may be eating is also of very poor quality and not balanced."

– Informant, Kisangi village, Kilwa

"Poverty brings about a sense of resignation because there is not much that people can do about the factors that fuel it. Such a feeling makes them despondent to the point that they even detest trying to learn new things."

– TASAF official in Kilwa

"Our voices are not heard. We have heard of programmes being implemented in other areas. I think our political leadership do not follow up on these. We end up being the losers."

– Informant, Nandambi village, Kilwa

Poverty, vulnerability and the life cycle

Individuals and households in the study areas were found to be exposed to risks and vulnerabilities which vary according to the stage of the life cycle (Table 3). Despite the absence of current demographic data for the study areas, informants confirmed that the study areas had a predominantly young population, a finding which is consistent with patterns observed in other parts of the United Republic of Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa.

A factor that was found to have significant implications for poverty and vulnerability is the growing neglect of older people in the research areas. Many older residents never made contributions to a pension fund, as nearly all worked informally throughout their working lives. Social protection thus remains the only viable means of mitigating the risks and vulnerabilities of old age.

Table 3. Risks and vulnerabilities by life-cycle stage

Life-cycle stage	Common risks and vulnerabilities of poor people	Study findings on vulnerabilities in forest-dependent communities
Infants and young (pre-school) children (age 0–4 years)	Poor maternal and early nutrition; stunted growth; poor cognitive development; acute vulnerability to disease and infection; exposure to hazardous environments; high dependency; disability through lack of early intervention; neglect and discrimination of girls	Mothers from poorer households were finding access to forests increasingly difficult, making it hard to obtain medicinal plants necessary for the survival of their younger children.
School-aged children (age 5–11 years)	Failure to enrol in primary school because of the high cost of scholastic materials, lack of interest or poor grades; school drop-out in the transition between primary and secondary levels; need to supplement household income by working	Some children in this age bracket dropped out of school either to earn income from logging activities or to help their families with routine chores such as collecting woodfuel from the forests.
Age 12–24 years	Heavy domestic responsibilities and inability to benefit from schooling; sexual exploitation for girls and young women; insufficient food or poor diets and the increased likelihood of illness; poor development of skills for less advantaged young people, resulting in further marginalization	Younger people had an increased risk of acquiring HIV infection and AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome), partly because of their limited access to information as they became sexually active. Traditionally in Lindi girls were taught about sex at a very early age as "preparation for marriage", but this led to early sexual activity, resulting in a lot of single motherhood in the community. Gender-based violence, early marriage and childbearing also increased the vulnerability of girls and young women.
Working age adults (age 25–55 years)	Failure to secure stable jobs or to ensure income and food security for their families; livelihoods dependent on agriculture, where labour productivity is very low; difficulty for small landowners and casual workers to change agricultural patterns or to invest in non-farm opportunities	Traditional gender roles limited female landownership and investment despite the prominent role of women in agriculture. Gender inequality was more pronounced among pastoralists than cultivators. Lack of access to credit facilities and the strenuousness of activities in forest-dependent communities (including fetching fuelwood) created new forms of vulnerability. In Manyara, unemployed youth could not acquire permits for access to forest products. Although youth were best placed to protect the forest, they were more prone to income poverty.
Old age (age 55 and above)	Frailty and illness in old age, coupled with increased child-care responsibilities where middle-aged adults have been lost to HIV and AIDS, leaving dependent children in the care of grandparents; increased likelihood of age-related disability and chronic illness	The study communities aged relatively early (45–55 years) and at relatively low income levels. Informal work was pronounced, with a nearly complete absence of contributory pensions, implying a great need for social protection to mitigate challenges of poor health, poor nutrition and discrimination (especially against widows) in old age and to help care for AIDS orphans in the communities.

Influence of access to land

At the household level, access to "adequate land for cultivation" was considered to be both an indicator of, and a critical factor in, well-being in the study areas. In Lindi a household that produces enough for consumption and has a surplus for sale is judged to be non-poor. With the extra income derived from surplus production such a household is perceived to be able to pay for a good education for children, to build a good house, to pay for health needs and to have good social standing. By the same token, limited access to land for cultivation implies limited yields and consequently food insecurity. Growing population pressure is believed by some to aggravate the poverty situation.

Small proportion of non-poor

According to district and NGO officials in Lindi, only about 10 percent of the population in the districts may be classified as non-poor. These are people from households that have a permanent house, diversified livelihoods (often in possession of some livestock), at least secondary-level education, children in fee-paying schools (mostly boarding schools that are away from the local community), ability to pay for health services and membership in a cooperative society or other similar association. Another 15 to 20 percent are of average poverty, often with a semi-permanent house, reasonable food security and children in local schools. Of the remaining 70 percent, approximately 40 percent are classified as poor while 30 percent are extremely poor. Further inquiry revealed that the bottom 70 percent of the population are not distinguishable by any distinct socio-economic characteristics.[3] In earlier years these households showed greater direct dependency on forests and forest products than other households, but more recently these households have had reduced access to forest resources, which has forced them to rely increasingly on wage labour, hence increasing their vulnerability and exposure to exploitation.

An increasing need for cash

The need for cash was reported to have increased significantly in the past few years in all three study areas. This was attributed to the growing costs of health care, education, transport and other needs. Despite the increased need for cash, many respondents felt that their efforts to conserve forests had not yielded significant cash benefits. In Nandambi village, for example, the villagers complained that they had received money from the REDD+ programme only once, and that village life continued to be difficult. Having previously stopped using the forested area for the growing of crops in order to conserve the forest, many felt that the officials concerned had not met their part of the bargain, perhaps suggesting that they were not receiving the cash that they had expected.

In some communities money was also reported to be spent on certain unproductive expenditures that reduced well-being, such as alcohol, with detrimental effects on material status of households, intrahousehold relations, health and nutrition. In all districts, particularly in the urban areas, a feeling of hopelessness, especially among

[3] The estimates made by key informants were only based on anecdotal information and the research team was unable to ascertain the full reliability of these estimates.

younger people, not only led to excessive alcohol consumption but was also blamed for conjugal conflicts, the break-up of marriages and a decline in the status and living standards of women and children.

"The arrangement that was sold to us is that we should conserve the forest in return for financial rewards. Instead, what happens is that when you want to obtain any forest products you have to pay for a permit and this money goes to the government. The implication is that the government gets richer while community members become poorer. Unfortunately, we do not have any alternative income streams. This double jeopardy means that we have neither money nor food."

– Informant, Kisangi village

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CAUSES OF POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

Deforestation

The causes of poverty in the forest-dependent communities that were the subject of this study are many and varied. Older people in Lindi concurred that deforestation has destroyed large expanses of what used to be forested areas and sources of community livelihoods. The desperate poverty situation in the communities was partly to blame. In the past this was exacerbated by irrational and isolationist conservation programmes which previously viewed communities as enemies rather than as partners. Without the participation of communities in the protection of forests, these important resources were sacrificed to the growing timber trade. The consequence was overexploitation of the forests and interference with the ecosystems.

"We have people who are old, disabled, mentally ill or suffering from a long-term illness but there are no schemes to help these households. Insurance is only provided to the families involved in the forest committees. We had floods this month which caused a lot of damage and the government provided 10 bags of maize per household. This was not enough to meet our needs."

"We have been able to get money as a community through forest conservation and to build a school, houses for the teachers, a dispensary, desks for the school and a house for the traditional healer. Despite the benefits of the forest, being surrounded by the forest has some negative effects like wild animals destroying crops which the villagers are dependent on. We have needs but support mostly comes from the community. We help those who are vulnerable in the community. Our means of livelihood is not able to support our needs and the government is not providing the needed support."

– Kisangi village, natural resources committee

"While land is in most instances available, it is not accessible to all who need it and there is lack of proper planning and equitable allocation. The situation is similar to having a house with five bedrooms, where four of five household members sleep in one room and the remaining one uses all the other four."

– Forestry official, Lindi

Landlessness

Forestry officials, community leaders and other professionals agreed with the above view, adding that the landlessness of a growing number of people in areas near forests had aggravated the situation. As a result, a number of people without land had been forced either to migrate to urban areas in search of paid employment or to eke out a living as sharecroppers, squatters or migrant workers. Others had been driven into illegal activities, raiding the forests to obtain timber and land as a means of survival. Many of the forest encroachers, rather than finding success, instead entered a new frontier of gangs, criminality, corruption and exploitation by rogue business people. While some among the officials presented a rosy picture of an effective and efficient system for managing forests, others who spoke on condition of anonymity pointed out that those who reported abuse of the forest to government agencies were instead persecuted. In Lindi, despite the existence of large tracts of land, the lack of equitable allocation and proper planning for land use was cited as a key factor contributing to landlessness and poverty.

Conflicts between farmers of crops and livestock

Cattle raising was sometimes blamed for landlessness, destruction of soil fertility and poverty, as well as some of the vulnerability of forest-dependent communities. It was acknowledged that in Manyara conflicts between crop farmers and nomadic cattle herders have been common for many years but have intensified in the past two decades. It was reported, for example, that with the declining access to pasture during the dry season Masai herdsmen have begun moving towards the south, where the rainy season is known to be longer and where the soil retains moisture for longer periods. These movements have led not only to conflict in the use of forests and their products, but also to frequent destruction of crops. In turn, the conflicts threaten peace and community stability. The introduction of participatory forest management notwithstanding, anecdotal evidence suggests that the meat and timber markets in Dar es Salaam and other urban areas are fuelling deforestation for livestock and logging in Lindi and parts of Manyara.

Unpredictable weather and climate change

In nearly all study sites respondents blamed climate change for negative impacts on crop and livestock productivity and hence on livelihoods and poverty trends. In all villages studied except Bereko and Kisese-Disa, respondents reported that significant changes in rainfall patterns in the past 20 years were resulting more frequently in high temperatures, drought, and flooding. Tornado-type wind systems during the rainy season were

reported to cause physical damage of forests, while high temperatures during the dry season were reported to predispose the forests to fires. These problems were becoming more frequent and more severe, exerting pressure on forest ecosystems and the forests' ability to provide such goods and services as medicinal products, fuelwood, poles for home construction and shrines for religious services. Forestry and fisheries officials in Lindi reported reduced suitability of habitats for a number of biological organisms as well as increased vulnerability of species that require particular locations for breeding or spawning. Climate changes were also observed to have negative effects on growing periods for crops, with increased out-of-season precipitation also leading to an increase in crop diseases. Coastal villages in Lindi were reported to be particularly vulnerable.

"Climate change has affected people's livelihoods in many different ways. Conversely, unregulated human activities have also led to the unpredictability of weather patterns, and in turn to challenging climate impacts. For a large number of forest-dependent agriculturists, for example, shifting cultivation is a common method of farming and most of this is carried out by clearing forest patches to tap the soil fertility which is associated with forested areas. The farmers mistakenly believe that by clearing the forests in order to grow such crops as sesame they would be able to regularly and sustainably attain very good harvests. When the cleared forest patches only yield good crops in one or two instances, they just clear more forested land. The pattern continues until most or all of the forest has been cleared. It is just a mythical belief that has significant impacts on the environment."

– District Commissioner, Lindi

"Ten years ago we did not have any serious water availability or access issues. However, the situation has in the last few years changed significantly, and we believe that the changed situation has a lot to do with deforestation. For example, there are times when I have to wake up at 2.00 hours in the dead of night to go and collect water together with other women. For those who can afford a 20-litre jerry can, it costs 1 000 Tanzanian shillings.[4] However, I cannot afford that amount of money, so the only option I have is to travel to the water point and take my children with me to fetch the water. The pond is located about two hours away, and the journey takes longer for older or disabled individuals. When you are hungry there is no peace. That is why even though we make efforts to conserve the forest, there will be individuals who through necessity engage in illegal logging in order to feed their families. In such circumstances you do not have much choice. While we may be trying to conserve the forest, others just go on destroying it, yet we all share the consequences. Unfortunately, support interventions have been very sporadic. For example, the last time that support was received was in 2002 when the Tanzania Red Cross provided community members with bags of maize. Nothing else has

[4] At the time of the study, 1 000 Tanzanian shillings was equivalent to approximately USD 0.50. To put this in perspective, the gross domestic product per capita in Tanzania was last recorded at USD 867 in 2016, equivalent to 7 percent of the world's average.

been seen since. Without such support it is quite clear that our forest will be vulnerable to abuse and misuse."

– Informant, Kisangi village

Disease prevalence, including AIDS and its consequences

Because of the sensitivity of the subject, the study was unable to obtain conclusive information on the prevalence of diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. However, anecdotal information and responses from informants in all the study sites suggested increases in HIV infection rates over the past 20 years, mostly attributable to poverty, poor nutrition, economic marginalization, opportunistic infections and gender inequality. Individuals from poorer households, it was argued, were more likely be infected with HIV and subsequently to become sick, and they tended to die faster than the non-poor, as they lacked not only good-quality nutrition but also health attention and medications. Some informants in Manyara and Dodoma reported that widowhood due to HIV/AIDS-related deaths was a key factor in the growing number of women-headed households, in turn known to result in vulnerability and poverty.

HIV/AIDS was reported to have had severe negative impacts on households and communities, causing changes in family composition and the way communities operate and destabilizing traditional social protection support systems. The epidemic has destroyed social capital and weakened production, leaving behind much younger and older people unable to work to support themselves. However, the sensitivity of this subject, coupled with the limited time available for probing it, precluded further insights on the subject.

Gender imbalance, poverty and vulnerability

Evidence from the field confirms that in forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania women's poverty and vulnerability are structural in nature, mostly rooted in socio-cultural patterns, demographic trends and the political economy. In Lindi, women were expected to provide food for their families while at the same time also providing for their natal families, which implied that they depended on the forests both for food and for diversifying income. For example, women, especially those from poorer households, made raffia bags and mats to generate income over which they would have control and to safeguard their future. Men, on the other hand, tended to depend more on labouring for wages. Some of the money earned by the women was either used for personal expenses or remitted to their natal families as security in case of separation from their husbands' families. In Dodoma and Manyara, it was reported that the collection and sale of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) by women tended to increase significantly a few weeks before children's school fees were due, which suggests that the women had acquired an important role in paying school fees. In support of this finding, women at all study sites alleged that men were increasingly "absconding from their responsibility of paying school fees for their children".

In general, women were observed to be more dependent on forests than men for

cash and non-cash income, which may be attributable to the fact that they lack land or opportunities to undertake more substantial farming activities and are often not able to migrate from their local areas to seek other prospects because they have to look after children.

In Dodoma and Manyara, women were perceived as the preferred custodians of forest resources on account of the knowledge and experience they acquired by working the fields, fetching fuelwood and collecting foodstuffs and medicinal plants. This view reflects a stereotypical view of women's roles in the family and the community. The responsibility for safeguarding the forest adds to women's already huge burden with no related improvement in rights, resources or benefits, exacerbating gender-based power imbalances in ownership, access and control of forest resources. The situation was often made worse by outright abuse (physical, emotional and financial/economic), most of which remained unreported to authorities because of the fear of reprisals or the distances involved.

"While reasonable progress has been made in bridging the gap between men and women in the United Republic of Tanzania, a lot more still needs to be done to bring about a reasonable level of equality between men and women in forest-dependent communities. Besides still being on the margins of the development opportunities that other communities are already enjoying, most women are neither allowed to own land nor included in routine decision-making processes. Most are also not allowed to speak in gatherings where there are men, and in the majority of situations their roles are reduced to taking care of the household. This situation is, however, beginning to change in some villages, with women taking on decision-making responsibilities, including on leadership committees."

– TASAF official, Kilwa

"Charcoal burning is one of the predominant economic activities in Lindi. A walk through the streets of Lindi Town revealed stacked-up bags of charcoal for sale every 5 to 10 metres. More than 1 000 charcoal bags are transported to Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar from Lindi District for sale each month."

– District Forestry Officer, Kilwa

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

The livelihoods of people living in, or close to, forests in the United Republic of Tanzania are inextricably linked to the forest ecosystems. Contrary to common perceptions, however, these activities are complex and interlinked in many ways. Agriculture and livestock are perhaps the two major sources of livelihood in the villages that neighbour forests, and to a large extent these depend on the forests for various inputs. Inside the

forests beekeeping, the hunting of wild game, collection of medicines and other activities based on forest resources are important. As observed above, forest-dependent communities in the country specifically rely on the forests for timber for house construction, fuelwood, forest-based agriculture and a wide range of NWFPs such as medicinal plants, fodder for animals, honey, bushmeat and other wild foods. Field studies in Lindi and Manyara also revealed that the forests are important for income generation. Charcoal burning, for example, was identified as one of the most prominent income generation activities in Lindi. Forests were also reported to provide dietary supplements, especially during lean seasons. However, most respondents also acknowledged that the same forest-dependent communities also contribute to forest degradation, attributed to the ever-increasing demand for forest products due to the country's growing population. [Photo 1]

The forests are also subject to other pressures such as overgrazing, shifting cultivation and vulnerability to forest fires – factors which are directly linked to the livelihood of the forest-dependent communities. However, the study was unable to obtain either official census figures or population estimates for the forest-dependent population in the respective villages, districts or regions. Consequently, it was not possible to ascertain how many people were involved in forest-based activities such as the collection of edible fruits and other foods, fuelwood for cooking, medicines, materials for agricultural implements, timber for house construction or fencing, fodder (grass and leaves) for livestock, or other marketable timber or NWFPs. Nonetheless, nearly all respondents in the study regions confirmed that overexploitation and unsustainable harvesting practices were significant. In addition, the respondents pointed out that a large proportion (probably more than 50 percent) of the less privileged population living near forested areas depended much more on forests and their products for their livelihood than better-off households; this is probably because poorer households have fewer alternatives. The Forestry Officer

Photo 1, Rural women selling fruits and charcoal near Dar es Salaam

in Lindi, for example, estimated that poorer communities relied on the forests for up to 70 or 80 percent of their livelihood. [Photo 2]

A number of forest-dependent communities, particularly those comprising poorer households, expressed a sense of uncertainty about whether they would have reliable access to and use of forests in the future. This fear was based on the ambiguity surrounding ownership of the forests and the likelihood of policy changes in the face of an increasingly liberalized policy regime. Women from poorer households, in particular, worried that forested areas, like many other public goods, risked being parcelled out to private entrepreneurs in the name of development. They argued that if ownership and control of a higher concentration of forests fell into private hands, this not only would affect well-being but would also lead to greater poverty among the forest-dependent communities because of lost options. However, most of the respondents, including key political decision-makers at the national level, believed that the forces that were likely to lead to this shift were outside their control and that nothing could be done about it.

Also, some community forests were reported to have been exposed to other hazards and risks. For example, on two different occasions Mingoyo village had been exposed to forest fires, which some informants attributed to people who wanted to use the forest for farming.

"For a long time forests served both as a form of livelihood and as a backstop or food reserve for community members, particularly in times of food insecurity. They were also used as sources of fuelwood, water and charcoal. However, due to the growing population and expansion of the town, the demand for forest products has increased significantly.

Photo 2, Timber and timber products in a carpentry workshop

As a result community members now have to travel longer distances to access the same products. Many of the water sources are also depleted."

"Progress has been made in the past two decades by some of the community members, but the proportion of those who have benefitted from the changes is very small indeed. On the contrary most of those who have not benefitted have simply slid into deeper poverty, which implies that inequality has been on the rise. Diversification from smallholder farming to other areas such as fish farming and salt farming is one way in which those community members who have escaped poverty have adapted. Others have been cutting trees from the forests for sale as timber, fuelwood or charcoal."

"However, even in situations where some community members are able to have a 'normal livelihood', this at times gets disrupted by extreme events which destroy crops, houses and public infrastructure. For example, in the first three months of 2016, the entire district was affected by floods which destroyed gardens, crops and houses."

– Informant, Mipingo Conservation and Development Initiative

INVESTMENT IN SOCIAL PROTECTION

As is the case in most other African countries, and despite high levels of deprivation, social protection has long had low priority in the United Republic of Tanzania. In the past, its low adoption was mainly due to the fear of some policy-makers that social protection would create dependency and discourage people from working. This situation seems to be changing; a growing body of evidence suggests that social protection measures are seen as an innovative and efficient way of reducing poverty, and as investments rather than costs. Hence in the past few years, substantial progress has been made towards developing both policies and programmes. In 2013, for example, the government approved implementation of the Productive Social Safety Net programme, a nation-wide conditional cash transfer programme targeting those in extreme poverty.

One of the programmes that has gained prominence is TASAF. Designed based on the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), TASAF aimed at helping communities contribute to their own development using two financing windows, namely the Community Development Initiative to improve public social service infrastructure and the Public Works Programme for local governments to target food-insecure areas with a cash-for-work programme. In terms of scope, TASAF was targeted to the 40 poorest districts (plus the two largest islands, Zanzibar and Pemba). TASAF is now in its third phase, still supporting the poorest and the most vulnerable groups through a series of interventions aimed at protecting households from seasonal and unexpected shocks; providing them with tools to mitigate current poverty and vulnerability; promoting improved living standards; and getting these households out of food poverty. The overall goal is to enable poor households to stabilize their food consumption, to prevent long-term consequences of extreme poverty and to enhance human development capabilities, assets and livelihoods.

This progress notwithstanding, evidence from both the field study and the literature suggests that the picture is not uniform. In some locations social protection uptake is slow, suggesting that more needs to be done. In others, various innovative services (such

as the provision of tree seedlings in Manyara) are implemented side by side with social protection interventions, although such efforts are still not fully integrated.

"Studies were carried out before implementing TASAF III to ensure that the poor were identified and therefore specifically targeted. Using participatory methods at the village level, a total of 2 754 households were targeted. The indicators that were used by the studies included the quality of housing and the number of meals a household had in a day. Based on this information, the most vulnerable households were identified and registered before social protection benefits could be provided. Two modalities were used. In one modality cash transfers were made to communities where poverty was known to exist, but these were not based on any means testing or conditionality. In this modality consideration was given to communities facing seasonal vulnerabilities, such as in the months from December to April when there is less work to do in the gardens and incomes are limited. During this period vulnerable community members are involved in public works programmes that are related to environmental conservation, receiving payment for this. However there is limited knowledge of the extent to which forest-dependent communities benefit from this scheme."

– TASAF official, Lindi

"Donors have been keen to support forest-dependent communities, but the government has been slow in providing a guiding framework for doing this. While guidelines are available on participatory forest management, guidance is short on how communities could integrate this into social protection or vice versa. The current support that is provided by donors through PFM should also be picked up by government to lessen the over-reliance on donors and thus create more sustainability."

– Informant, Mipingo Conservation and Development Initiative

In Lindi, respondents reported that the Mipingo Conservation and Development Initiative is promoting forest conservation by encouraging communities to manage the forests sustainably for economic, social and other benefits. A number of success stories were reported where livelihoods were improved. For example, in Nanjirinji the community initially set aside 61 000 hectares for forest conservation. From the financial proceeds, the community was able to build five boreholes, a dispensary, a market, a school and a police station. Personal and household benefits also included clothing and a maternity health care scheme. Nanjirinji has thus become a model village where visitors from elsewhere in the country and other parts of the world come to learn from the community's experiences.

"Nanjirinji is an impressive village. When you go to visit this place not only are you welcomed warmly, but community members even proceed to offer you a welcome meal and gifts, which is uncommon in other villages. This is an indicator that this particular

village is not struggling as much as the others do. Nainok is another village that has learned from Nanjirinji. From benefits that the village obtained from the forest, the community here were able to start an insurance scheme for vulnerable older people and to provide them with food and a regular transfer of cash. This is a clear indication that there is a form of locally inspired social protection."

– District Forestry Officer, Lindi

The experience of Kibiti, another village involved in participatory forest management, was similar to those of Nanjirinji and Nainok. In this village, tree sales in 2015 totalled 10 million Tanzanian shillings, which enabled the community to carry out a numer of activities including purchase of food for 53 vulnerable households. Because of these benefits the communities attach great importance to the sustainable use of forests. They are inspired to set their own priorities and to use the benefits from the forests to meet those priorities. However, the communities also identified some challenges. One of these was the difficulty of monitoring tree harvesting effectively. The research team was informed that even though some people are authorized to harvest specific volumes on payment of the requisite fees, they sometimes fell many more trees than permitted. Such unsustainable use of the forest leads to loss of revenue for the communities.

In Manyara Region, the World Food Programme (WFP) experimented with provision of food to community members involved in charcoal burning. A subsequent assessment showed that during the period in which the food was being provided, no community member got involved in charcoal burning, implying that the primary reason for households undertaking this type of activity was to be able to provide food for their members. It was also reported that as soon as the food supplied by WFP ran out, the community members returned to the charcoal burning activities in the forest. It could be concluded that where lack of food is a key vulnerability characteristic of affected households, feeding for these households would be a suitable social protection intervention.

In Lindi, the mangrove programme funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) – a national programme to help communities protect the environment – trained the community to establish environment committees at village level. The training was aimed at persuading community leaders to invest in the establishment of tree lots from which people could obtain timber and other forest products. It also sensitized the leaders on good land-use practices. The committees in turn trained the communities to engage in sustainable income-generating activities such as beekeeping, chicken rearing and fish ponds. However, while this programme generally improved lives, it was less successful than anticipated because of the limited consideration given to the peculiarities of forest-dependent communities. Some of the interventions were also very short term. Some other examples of livelihood interventions are presented in Box 3.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that poverty and vulnerability are important drivers influencing how forests and their products are used, while other key factors include the perceptions of communities regarding ownership of the forests; the power

Box 3 - Examples of livelihood initiatives

In Mkanga village in Lindi District, the National Framework for REDD started a beekeeping initiative with 100 beehives. Unfortunately, only a limited amount of honey was harvested, leading to abandonment of the initiative.

A Community-Based Beekeeping Project established with support from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) aimed at diversifying community income from agriculture in Mihima and Mingoyo villages (Lindi). The Jiendeleze group was formed to pioneer the initiative with the village governments, which agreed to allow the practice of beekeeping in the village land forest reserve. Specifically in Mingoyo, 20 groups were established and 15 beehives were provided, divided among the groups. However the yield of honey from the beehives was variable, and in due course this led to misunderstandings among the groups. The successful groups accused the unsuccessful ones of stealing the honey from the productive hives, in the process even destroying the good hives.

Building on results from the Lindi/Mtwara Fish Culture Project, and with support from the Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Tourism, Natural Resources and Environment, the Lindi District Administration introduced fish farming to help improve the livelihoods of the community, but this also did not last, as theft of fish was rampant.

With the failure of the above initiatives, and in the absence of other income generation options, the communities have again resorted to the exploitation of forest products. Social protection interventions could have a role in addressing this challenge.

that the communities have to make decisions about the forests; and the benefits that accrue to community members from the sale of forest products. These findings seem to contradict previous assumptions that a lack of knowledge and awareness was the key factor leading to misuse of forests and forest products. In spite of their understanding, poverty, vulnerability and the difficulties of many households in securing livelihoods still stand in the way of many communities' efforts to conserve forests. In both Lindi and Dodoma, for example, the main reason reported for unabated charcoal burning was most households' lack of any other secure source of income. Young people, the bulk of the population, lack jobs and assets. Similarly, smallholder and landless farmers, rural women and categories of the population constrained in their ability to work (such as older people and those with disabilities) find it extremely difficult to earn a decent living.

HIV/AIDS and social protection

A key area of need relates to the link among HIV/AIDS, social protection and forest-dependent communities, a topic on which the study team was not able to obtain sufficient information because of the sensitivity attached to open discussion of HIV/AIDS issues. The team would have required more time than was available to build rapport with affected communities and households before delving into these issues. Available information from some informants nonetheless suggested that as a result of HIV/AIDS, more households have been struggling to make ends meet. Some of the households cope by reducing consumption of essential items including food, while others either borrow from friends and relatives or revert to dependence on family members or NGOs. Women's

vulnerability is more pronounced, since in most circumstances they are the main caregivers and when they become widowed their inheritance and property rights are less likely to be recognized. Furthermore, in the absence of reliable and regular treatment regimes, households turn to forest resources for medicinal products, subsistence and a means of generating income. The only social assistance opportunities for people living with HIV and their households are through programmes for the poor. However, as mentioned above, the distribution of such programmes among forest-dependent communities is uneven, and where such programmes exist, access to them is low.

REDD+ and related processes

Of the programmes that are currently being implemented among forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania, REDD+ is one of the most prominent (Boxes 4 and 5). The country's REDD framework (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009) was drawn up following a range of consultations with forest-dependent communities, civil society, government departments and, to some extent, the private sector. It determines the main issues to be addressed in the country's REDD strategy, reflects the priority issues agreed among stakeholders and describes who will be involved in resolving them. The activities identified in the framework were overseen by the REDD Task Force, with Norway as the key bilateral donor for the programme.

The research team held a detailed discussion in Kondoa District, Manyara Region on the performance of REDD+. Community leaders in the district acknowledged that prior to the introduction of the programme, forests and forest products were under extreme pressure, with far-reaching impacts for local people. Poles and thatching grass for building and roofing were beginning to be in severe shortage, and grazing areas were becoming smaller and depleted of grass. Official practice at the time was to restrict the

Box 4 - REDD+ programming

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) endorsed the concept of Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) with a view to stabilizing atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO^2) concentrations. In 2008, the UN-REDD Programme was launched as a joint effort of FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). One of the key objectives of the programme is to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of developing countries to reduce forest-related emissions and to achieve "REDD+ readiness" in order to participate eventually in a performance-based payment mechanism.

Building on lessons learned from early experimentation in nine pilot countries during a "quick start" phase, the programme formalized its approach with a five-year strategy (2011–2015) designed "to promote the elaboration and implementation of National REDD+ Strategies to achieve REDD+ readiness, including the transformation of land use and sustainable forest management and performance-based payments" (UN-REDD, 2011). The strategy involves two complementary sets of interventions, namely National Programmes, which provide comprehensive technical assistance aimed at preparing and implementing National REDD+ Strategies or Action Plans and provision of support to national action, and the Global Programme, which provides on-demand targeted technical assistance, including normative and standardized approaches to REDD+.

Box 5 - Example of a REDD implementation programme in the United Republic of Tanzania

NGO grantee: Mpingo Conservation Project

Location: Kilwa District, Lindi Region

Time scale: Four years

Amount: USD 1 948 123

Distinguishing elements: Implementing REDD through PFM approaches and incorporating Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards for timber harvesting in REDD areas

use of the forest completely through the Dodoma Land Rehabilitation Programme, Hifadhi Ardhi Dodoma (HADO), which managed the forest. This restriction brought about resentment from communities. Even with this strict management, corruption was rampant and mainly worked against the interests of the poorer sections of the population.

HADO is still in place, but its former responsibilities have now been shifted from the district to the community (village) level, and management has been transferred to communities. The research team was also informed that following the shift of HADO activities to the village level, environmental committees were established to oversee activities that were previously handled by HADO. When implementation of REDD+ began, the village government was already there to oversee land conservation activities. Nevertheless, the communities had many suspicions regarding the role that REDD+ was expected to play, especially because it followed after HADO, which was still perceived as an overly restrictive and unsupportive institution.

REDD+ implementation was supposed to begin with 21 villages but had to follow the formation of the village environmental committees. In Mitati village (one of the subjects of the research), the committee was established in 2011 with the urging, guidance and support of REDD officials. Relevant by-laws were also formulated, but because suspicions have remained high no agreement has yet been reached on the role of REDD or on the proposed land-use plan. The village executive officers also decided on their own to implement the proposed REDD activities since they were empowered by law to do so, citing public interest as their rationale for taking this course of action. The executive officers also argued that development plans were already in existence – long before the entry of REDD – and that REDD entailed only supplementary proposals, such as training activities.

One of the challenges that REDD officials described to the research team is the difficulty of translating the REDD+ concept. None of the community members that the team met understood the meaning of "carbon trading" or how communities could benefit from it. In addition, some people were diffident because REDD+ was presented as a programme that would benefit the village as a collective and they did not see how they would benefit as individuals. Some officials attributed this failure to make connections between community and household benefits to lack of education or exposure.

"As village government leaders, we accepted the [REDD+] concept because of the benefits that we saw in it. This is why we started an environmental committee. However some village members boycotted the meetings that we organized and they even rubbished the agenda we had put forward. Those who use the resources are many, but the majority did not want to discuss the agenda."

"The forest is currently not being managed well. Any misuse comes across as a cancer which when it enters the body begins affecting the rest of the body progressively. By the time one realizes that the cancer has eaten most of the body it would be too late to do anything that is remedial. Death would be the ultimate result. As community leaders we are trying our level best to protect the natural resources through the institutions and by-laws that we establish. But we still have internal problems as well. For example, the majority of people who are selected in the village government are the same ones who are actively engaged in charcoal burning, timber felling and sale of fuelwood."

– Community leader

Deliberate misinformation was also blamed for some people's resistance to REDD. For example, some community members alleged that the REDD+ programme was planning to turn the forests into wildlife reserves to be controlled by Tanzania National Parks and that this would result in even more restricted community access to the forests.

Village Community Banks

Community members and officials mentioned Village Community Banks (VICOBA) as an economic support programme key in promoting socio-economic development and livelihood enhancement objectives, although the current study did not have direct field experience with this particular institution. Originally adopted from the Niger, in West Africa, the VICOBA model was introduced in the United Republic of Tanzania in 2000 with the aim of providing informal financial institutions that could reach unserved poor community members and overcome their capital shortcomings. VICOBA programmes are initiated as informal, village-based savings and credit interventions, structured to make small amounts of credit accessible to poor people, especially those in rural areas. In addition, the programmes organize and train communities in a wide range of skills that they can use to improve their economic status (Box 6).

Because of the closeness of VICOBA to communities and its use of a participatory model for management, the village banks were reported to be of great benefit to poor Tanzanians, especially when compared with the more formal Savings Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS) or traditional banks. The village banks were also hailed as institutions that can be used in promoting and enhancing the functioning of social protection objectives. For example, it has been credited with enhancing capacities in such practical skills as simple accounting, business management and basic entrepreneurial practices.

According to Chipindula and Mwanga (2015), VICOBA interventions have especially improved women's access to microfinance, thereby leading to their increased economic

Box 6 - Village Community Banks: how they work

The Village Community Banks provide a number of services including soft loans, savings facilities and provision of training in management as well as social and economic development. For most VICOBA facilities, the first loan to a member is provided three months after the member has begun making savings deposits. The first loan has to be repaid within three months and the second within six months. The loan amount provided in the first instance is often equivalent to three times the member's savings. For example a member who has saved 50 000 shillings is eligible for a loan of 150 000 shillings. After the first cycle, the bank leaders can offer any amount that a member may request if they are satisfied that the member has both the capacity and commitment to repay the loan. Other factors influencing the amount offered include the amount of money on account and the rate of repayment of previous loans.

Capital for running VICOBA is mobilized through loans from other financial institutions, grants which are sometimes offered by national and international development institutions, and shares contributed by group members. Group members are also expected to keep increasing their "share capital" in the bank as a way of ensuring that the group has adequate liquidity. Some groups also run a social or emergency fund realized from fines that are collected whenever a member "misbehaves or fails to attend the weekly meetings on time". Fines are charged to members who fail to attend meetings without informing the group leaders.

and social empowerment. The authors further argue that as women access microfinance services through VICOBA, transformations begin to happen in their lives, including improved astuteness in business and decision-making. They add that microfinance programmes have also contributed to positive changes in gender roles, and that female VICOBA members were better respected and valued because of their improved economic standing.

In Lindi and Manyara, the village banks are popular for a number of reasons. The institutions are easily accessible to local communities; they are unbureaucratic in their process for lending out money; and they are sensitive to and fully supportive of the process of skill building. However, the VICOBA concept also presents challenges. While it provides a means of empowering women both economically and socially, in some situations loans acquired through the village banks can be disempowering for women. This tends to happen where household power relations disfavour women and where men continue to exercise control over them. In such cases, women's newly acquired economic power often leads to feelings of disempowerment on the part of men and subsequently to domestic violence. Borrowers with joint collateral arrangements also face particular challenges in situations where one or more of the borrowers cannot repay the loans, which leads to friction among group members. Organizational challenges of VICOBA include weak group structures, high levels of illiteracy among group members, weak or ineffective leadership and the absence of mechanisms for equitable sharing of revenues that accrue from interest charges.

In Mkanga village in Lindi District, VICOBA have been enthusiastically embraced. Loans help community members to start or improve their small businesses, which in the

short term leads to positive changes in the well-being of those involved in the project. However, in the longer term, some people borrow a lot more than they can repay and without proper planning, which leads to indebtedness and subsequent loss of the assets they give as collateral, hence deeper poverty.

Despite the outlined challenges, VICOBA has proved an important instrument in promoting a savings and investment culture. The "people-friendly" banks are effective in mobilizing financial resources strategically by enabling members to engage in small-scale productive activities. This has particularly been true in communities where TASAF was operational, which implies that social protection interventions were mutually supportive in promoting savings and investments. The VICOBA model is also being used by a number of other institutions that focus attention on community development and natural resource management. The Women Economic Development Project implemented by the Lindi Women Development Trust Fund is an example of the versatility of the model and its potential applicability to social protection programming.

"VICOBA enabled me to have access to capital and also to buy a plot, build a house and start a tailoring shop."

– Female VICOBA member, Mduwi Village

"A loan from VICOBA enabled me to pay family debts and buy food for the family."

– Female VICOBA member, Mduwi Village

4. Analysis of findings

UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

While social protection has in the past few decades been central to many policy discussions as both a conceptual approach and a concrete set of policies and programmes, the understanding of how this concept differs from routine poverty reduction was found to be limited even among the officials implementing the country's social protection programmes. In particular, the link between "vulnerabilities of particular groups or individuals" (in this case forest-dependent communities) and the role of the State in addressing these vulnerabilities did not feature prominently in the study's discussions with key stakeholders. If it is agreed that the State is a provider and protector of citizens, the understanding of social protection needs to go beyond mitigation of shocks and key vulnerabilities to embrace broader measures characterized by Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) as protective (recovery from shocks), preventive (mitigating risks in order to avoid shocks), promotive (promoting opportunities) and transformative (focusing on underlying structural inequalities which give rise to vulnerability).

"BLAMING THE VICTIM"

While most respondents acknowledged that poverty and vulnerability were pronounced in most of the study areas, there was also a tendency, especially among the elite, to blame poor people for their situation. Some argued, for example, that education in the United Republic of Tanzania has long been free and that poor people should take advantage of it. Others argued that most poor people are poor because of their "bad life choices", such as "wasting money on alcohol consumption", producing more children than they can look after, borrowing more than they can pay, or even squandering money on expensive but non-productive consumables. However, these arguments rarely take into account the fact that many people are born into poverty and that it is harder for such people not to be poor. Even where education is provided free of charge, families still have to pay for scholastic materials and uniforms and to ensure that children have a meal while at school. Furthermore, a number of respondents pointed out that the quality of free education was so poor that those who attended school had few opportunities to benefit from it. Such social protection instruments as school feeding programmes can help to address some of the problems, but even these need to take into account the peculiarities of particular categories of people if progress is to be achieved.

POVERTY, VULNERABILITY AND LIVELIHOODS FOR FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

Based on the field findings, it can be concluded that poverty and vulnerability among the United Republic of Tanzania's forest-dependent communities is a function of two types of factors, structural and non-structural. While forests have had a key role in tempering environmental degradation, a combination of remote rural location, an absence of quality services, the limited nature of alternative livelihood opportunities and the lack of targeted social protection programmes heightens community vulnerability to shocks and stresses for the forest-dependent communities. The situation is compounded by the growing inability of the communities to participate in markets because of their low purchasing power and the impacts of mounting neoliberal policies. Similarly, the communities are constrained by limited access to assets and resources, as well as low agricultural productivity which reduces their ability to cope with emerging economic and natural risks and shocks.

Traditionally, forests served as safety nets to mitigate the impacts of crises, and the communities depended on trees and forests in their surroundings for food and nutrition security as well as medicines. As access to the forests becomes more restricted, risk and vulnerability increase. Therefore, social protection is critical for these communities, to strengthen their resilience, to address issues of extreme poverty and to promote sustainable forest management practices. Social protection can thus have a triple role of promoting forest conservation, livelihoods of forest-dependent communities and food security.

CAUSES OF POVERTY AND IMPACTS ON FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

Based on evidence from both published and grey literature and from anecdotal sources it is reasonable to conclude that forest-dependent communities in the United Republic of Tanzania differ significantly from other communities in their financial and other assets. The proximate reasons for these differences range from structural inequality to the lack of functioning markets, uneducated or poorly educated populations and location factors. However, the three fundamental causes of poverty and vulnerability in all the regions where this study was undertaken are location, governance and the political economy.

The communities investigated in this research predominantly live in remote rural locations, mostly lacking services. These communities often have weak, unconnected and uninfluential leaders who are usually unable to instigate development interventions because they lack information, resources or clout. In these communities a narrow group of institutions, professionals and lower-level political leaders tends to dominate public policy (related to forests and other natural resources). Public efforts that are geared to addressing poverty, risk and vulnerability for forest-dependent communities are susceptible to abuse, with the local politico-administrative elite sometimes distributing resources among themselves via the weakly regulated mechanisms of so-called participatory forest management. Table 4 summarizes some of these issues in a conceptual and analytical framework which views the marginality of forest-dependent communities as a root cause of poverty and vulnerability. Causal factors are deemed to lock the communities in systems and structures from which they would like to but are unable to escape.

Table 4. Indicative analytical framework for forest-dependent communities: root and proximate causes of poverty and vulnerability

Dimension	Root causes	Proximate causes	Impacts
Historical	Remoteness, marginalization, limited access to services	Unregulated exploitation of forests for their products	Diminished livelihood options leading to hunger and deeper poverty
Political	Inequality, asymmetrical power relations	Marginalization of particular categories of forest-dependent communities (e.g. landless)	Destitution
Socio-economic	Gender discrimination and exclusion, leading to marginalization of women	Women's concerns ignored in decision-making	Underdevelopment of women's potential, leading to increased vulnerability and need for targeted social protection
	Community characteristics, including poor infrastructure (roads, water, electricity) and services (health, education)	Undiversified livelihoods because of limited skills	Limited productivity and increased exposure to risks
	Demographic characteristics, e.g. household size, age structure, dependency ratio	High dependency ratio leading to school drop-out; early marriage; HIV	Increased exploitation of forests; reduced productivity; asset loss
	Economic and market instability	Mass outmigration, especially of youth	Degraded lands; helpless older people and children
Regional	Poor agronomic practices	Vulnerability to flooding and forest fires; remoteness from the centre, linked to poor quality of governance	Lost opportunities

WEATHER AND CLIMATE VARIABILITY

Forest-dependent communities in the research districts were observed to be particularly vulnerable to climate variability and climate change, partly because of their heavy reliance on trees and other forest products. This situation is exacerbated by growing population pressure which strains the environment, leading to biodiversity loss, rapid deterioration of land cover and a significant decrease in water availability because of the destruction of catchment areas. According to the Forestry Officer in Lindi District, these pressures also have negative impact on the distribution of tree and other plant species in the forests and on forest and rangeland cover. Informant interviews in Kilwa confirmed that the forest-dependent communities in the district tend to suffer more than others when faced with extreme events such as floods, tropical storms and landslides, because they live in areas and in housing structures that are more susceptible to extreme events;

they have inadequate resources to cope with these harsh events; and they generally lack social protection cover to cushion the impact of extreme events.

Climate change also has impact on other sources of vulnerability and insecurity for forest-dependent communities. For example, in the study areas, the spread of HIV/AIDS is linked with growing inequality, social conflict and weather variability. The combination of these circumstances with recurring droughts, floods and pest outbreaks reduces the ability of the communities to manage risks. In such instances even small changes in climate can trigger significant impact for large numbers of forest-dependent people.

SOCIAL PROTECTION PROVISION AND ITS LINKS TO FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

Changes in the areas where forest-dependent communities live, such as heightened loss of biodiversity or increasing population, tend to happen slowly, but they are often irreversible. Because the changes are slow, attention and responses have likewise been slow, or sometimes non-existent. Evidence from both fieldwork and the literature review for this study suggests that social protection coverage among forest-dependent communities is extremely limited. Where some programmes have been implemented, the driving force for this has been the perceived poverty levels in relation to communities from other regions, rather than the peculiar risks and vulnerability faced by the communities in light of their forest dependence. Accordingly, response measures and approaches have been based not on the fundamental or root causes of the vulnerability but on the effects – poor livelihoods. In other words, social protection instruments and complementary services have not been designed with forest-dependent communities in mind. This drawback has been exacerbated by the high level of "sectorization" (the tendency for programmes to be conceived, designed and implemented vertically based on sectors, subsectors, or vulnerability categories, such as education, health and agriculture; disability; children and women) and "projectization" (the practice of establishing numerous short-term or time-bound, and often donor-driven, projects) of social protection. A common cause and effect in both approaches is the proliferation of policies, strategies and interventions.

The lack of innovation in the area of social protection for forest-dependent communities has not helped the situation. For example, despite common knowledge of an alarming rate of deforestation, there has not been any suggestion that the free supply of tree seedlings to communities could be considered as a responsive social protection instrument. The lack of intersectoral linkages between existing social protection programmes and mainstream development programmes has also inhibited the benefits for communities that live near, or depend on, forests for their livelihoods. While it is now well recognized that cross- or intersectoral development interventions are important for complementarities and value addition, social protection continues to be implemented in isolation of other development interventions, with opportunities being missed for social protection to contribute to better outcomes in the respective sectors. The failure to develop holistic concepts or to ensure that social protection programmes are underpinned by common strategic goals leads not only to a proliferation of projects, but also to the potential for mismatched projects, programmes and national and subnational priorities.

GENDER, FOREST-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Beyond what has already been reported, the study did not adduce much additional evidence on the links between gender and forestry and how they influence the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. In the study areas, as elsewhere in the country, it was indicated that power relations that discriminate against women remain, and that men and women have different roles in managing forests. Besides using forest resources differently, men and women also have different access to forest products (with women tending to focus on gathering food or collecting fuelwood and medicinal products for their families, while men collect timber and poles for building or are involved in charcoal burning for sale). Although the policy environment was observed to have improved over the years, women were observed to have less secure land rights and access to forests, and they also participated less in decision-making on issues of forest management. This finding implies that many of the decisions that are made by the different committees do not proactively consider women's forestry needs and roles, and their failure to do so may have negative impact on women, their households and consequently their livelihoods. From this viewpoint, the study notes that gender considerations are still not prominent in the design or implementation of forest-related interventions. In turn this implies that women in forest-dependent communities may be facing further marginalization and may hence have greater need of targeted approaches. Social protection could play an important part in addressing this gap.

The PFM approach was reported to have generally helped in making improvements to previously degraded forests, but the extent to which women have benefited from the approach is still difficult to gauge. For example, the study established that PFM considerably reduced women's access to fuelwood. Restrictions on grazing have also resulted in increased workload for women since the introduction of PFM, since the women are now required to collect fodder and bring it to the homesteads. Unfortunately, proceeds from the sale of milk are predominantly handled by men and are not equitably shared with women.

INFORMALITY IN THE FOREST SECTOR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

As has already been suggested, forest-dependent communities earn their livelihoods mainly from informal employment. By definition, this type of work rarely entails access to social protection. Although it was once thought that informality would progressively give way to formal employment, providing access to more formal types of social security, this perception has changed over the past few decades as informal-sector activities have persisted (and sometimes become accentuated). The main characteristics of the informal sector, however, have not changed much (including predominance of women and low-skill and low-paying jobs), nor has the lack of appropriate social protection instruments and interventions.

Inability to participate in the labour market and the lack of social protection result in disadvantages for forest-dependent communities and limit their opportunities, leading in turn to greater engagement in insecure types of employment and hence high levels

of poverty and further marginalization. This cyclic relationship creates "poverty traps" from which escape is difficult. The introduction and adaptation of innovative social protection instruments and approaches are needed to address this challenge. Some examples might include weather-indexed agricultural insurance, health insurance or introduction of free tree seedlings.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

Communities that live close to forests in the United Republic of Tanzania were found to be experiencing poverty and vulnerability mostly because of limited access to services and remote location. The livelihood strategies of these communities are inseparable from the forests, and any changes to the forest ecosystems also affect them directly. Climate change is bringing about such ecosystem changes and is expected to have significant impact on the ability of the forest to provide sustainable livelihoods for the communities. Consequently, the livelihoods of the communities are intricately vulnerable to climate changes. The study findings also suggest that the vulnerability of forest communities is mediated by demography, culture and the livelihood strategies they employ.

There is considerable evidence to show that forest-dependent communities in the study regions use the forests for subsistence and, increasingly, for earning an income. However, beyond providing goods and services, the forests are of strategic importance to the communities in providing some kind of a safety net in times of crisis and hence avoiding a situation of destitution. This safety net role increasingly needs to be filled by social protection interventions.

PROVISION OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

The evidence from this study suggests that the current provision of social protection in the United Republic of Tanzania is neither commensurate with, nor specifically responsive to, the nature, the needs or the complexity of the vulnerability of forest-dependent communities. Given that poorer households in these communities are generally more forest reliant (obtaining a higher share of their income from the forest), negative changes to the forest resource base affect them considerably. Specific social protection measures are needed for those who are exposed to this kind of poverty and vulnerability. These measures can have three key roles for the communities:

- providing access to instruments that help to build or enhance resilience, enabling the affected people to manage better the social and economic risks and environmental threats that they face;
- providing direct income support or other instruments to alleviate extreme poverty, overcome food insecurity and increase productivity by stimulating the local economies of forest-dependent communities;
- promoting increased adoption of sustainable forest management practices.

WHO DEGRADES FORESTS?

The study has shown that legal and illegal logging plus charcoal burning are viewed as key factors in the interaction between people and forests in the United Republic of Tanzania. Contrary to popular belief, however, the primary drivers of these practices are usually commercial interests that are rooted elsewhere, away from the communities that live in the area. Even though the study identified poverty and vulnerability as drivers of exploitation of timber and NWFPs, and social protection as an important avenue for addressing this challenge, it is evident that timber trade and charcoal burning do a great deal more harm to forest biodiversity than the routine survival practices of forest-dependent communities (including cultivation, collection of building poles and fuelwood and collection of medicinal products).

It is also clear that NWFPs are not usually considered when participatory forest management plans are being developed in the study area, which gives the impression that community members who go to the forest to collect these may be degrading the forests. On the contrary, the people who obtain short-term permits to use the forests are more likely to have negative impact on them. The increased use of PFM and the introduction of different social protection instruments, their patchy distribution notwithstanding, are positive steps in engendering better ownership and responsibility. However more needs to be done to ensure more effective community participation in regulating the use of forests by short-term consumers.

THE PATCHY AND INTERMITTENT NATURE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROVISION

The sporadic nature of social protection provided to the country's forest-dependent communities makes its impact limited in addressing poverty and vulnerability. It is evident that over the past five to ten years attention has been focused on expanding social protection provision, especially in situations of increased risk and vulnerability for the communities; however, a combination of resource scarcity, weak institutional capacity and the absence of consistent political support has resulted in slow progress. The persistent predominance of subsistence agriculture and informal employment compounds the challenges, with implications for the types of mechanisms that would be usable and appropriate to the income levels and conditions of the communities. Unsurprisingly, a significant part of the Tanzanian social protection system has developed as a formal arrangement, reflecting a focus on people in formal employment, and until recently it excluded the majority of people in the informal sector. Today, however, social protection is promoted as a right rather than a reactive form of relief, which emphasizes its link to longer-term development objectives.

COHERENCE IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES

The study findings reveal that policies and programmes that on the one hand promote forest conservation and sustainable management and on the other seek to enhance

improvements in people's livelihoods are in place. However, these policies and programmes are neither interlinked nor designed in such a way that they can achieve the higher goals of "sustainable forest management for improved livelihoods". Beyond the design and implementation of PFM programmes, innovative approaches for integrating natural resource management and social protection programmes have not yet been developed in a way that could optimize policy influences on forest livelihoods, improve individual smallholder livelihoods or bring about long-term changes in institutions and governance structures.

GENDER, THE USE OF FOREST PRODUCTS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Evidence from Lindi and Manyara confirms the different roles played by men and women in forest resources management. While women predominantly focus on the collection of those forest products that help in meeting subsistence and survival requirements, such as fuelwood, forest foods, fodder for animals, medicines and products for making baskets and other home implements (as well as water collected from the forests), men focus their attention on money-generating items such as timber and charcoal. When men collect fuelwood it is almost always for sale purposes. When the forests are degraded the effect is therefore particularly felt by women, who face increasing hardship in meeting subsistence needs. Women complained that when forests were not managed well it was they who had to walk long distances to collect fuelwood, fodder or medicinal plants. Because of this concern, it was believed that women valued conservation more than their menfolk. Yet women have only a marginal role in forest management committees.

THE VALUE OF FORESTS – BEYOND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

At the community level, forests were found to have value that goes beyond economic and social dimensions. In Lindi, for example, they host religious shrines where communities invoke ancestral spirits. Their preservation is therefore inherently spiritual for the communities that live near them.

The introduction of REDD+ programming brought forward the issue of forests as stores of significant amounts of carbon. From this angle, the informants increasingly viewed the forests as essential in reducing the build-up of atmospheric carbon dioxide, and effective forest management was seen as having the ability to increase agricultural productivity.

Because of these values, sustainable forest management has gained importance in the past few years. A potential intervention that is worthy of attention, perhaps as a new social protection instrument, is free distribution of tree seedlings to households that live near forests, so as to encourage the planting and re-planting of trees and help prevent the collapse of tree stocks.

THE NEED FOR INNOVATIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

Based on the foregoing discussion, an important conclusion is that social protection for forest-dependent communities should not be perceived only as an ex-post, short-term "gap-filling" measure, but also as an important component of the entire forestry

livelihood support process. Besides providing support to individuals and families in dealing with life-cycle vulnerabilities or enabling poor and vulnerable people to acquire resilience to respond to crisis and shocks, social protection should also be aimed at building human and social assets or stimulating the inclusion of individuals and families in the productive sector. Therefore, the innovations required are those that take account of the peculiarities of forest-dependent communities, such as the periodic or seasonal exposure to particular risks (e.g. seasonal food shortages) and remote location. Examples might include school feeding programmes, special provisions for health insurance or adoption of weather-indexed agricultural insurance.

CONCLUDING NOTE

Forests are important both for livelihood purposes and as shock absorbers for the communities that depend on them, especially for the poorer households. To protect these households, it is imperative to identify sustainable social protection interventions that are linked to issue-sensitive delivery of services. While current social protection interventions appear inadequate, a wide range of instruments and approaches could help build the resilience of forest-dependent communities while at the same time transforming their livelihoods.

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Social protection programmes in the United Republic of Tanzania are developing fast. However, provision of social protection for forest-dependent communities is still limited. Through participatory forest management, credible efforts are being made to create community ownership of forests and to initiate projects and programmes that seek to address vulnerability among the communities. These efforts are a potentially good foundation for building sustainable social protection responses for the affected communities.

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